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REG 33/A

Memorandum From Robert Pastor of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)

Washington, October 4, 1978

1 Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 45, Latin America, 8-12/78. Confidential. A copy was sent to Mathews. Inderfurth and Denend initialed the memorandum.

3.5(c) 2 Brzezinski highlighted this sentence in the left-hand margin and wrote, "good." Presumably a reference to Document XX [redacted] No account of a staff meeting was found.

3 Not further identified. A response from Brzezinski was not found. [~~In an October 6 memorandum to Aaron forwarding this memorandum, Inderfurth wrote, "I think he has a good understanding—in a general sense—of what we want to accomplish with our human rights policy and how we intend to pursue it."~~ [redacted] 3.5(c)

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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October 4, 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM: ROBERT PASTOR

SUBJECT: Impact of U.S. Human Rights Policy in Latin America

After our discussion at the staff meeting last week, I tasked the CIA to do an overall assessment of the impact of our human rights policy in the Southern Cone. No one questions that the sensitivities of certain government and military officials have been affected by the human rights policy; the important questions are whether our long-term relationships will be strengthened or harmed by the policy and whether the policy has led, and will continue to lead, to improvements in the human rights situations in those countries and in others.

While the human rights policy may be a good instrument of ideological diplomacy in other areas, I don't think that ought to be one of our purposes in this hemisphere. I was working under the impression that the goals of our human rights policy include: to contribute to a climate in which human rights are increasingly respected and the costs of repression have increased as well; to identify the United States with a universal cause, which you have described as "the increasing self-assertiveness of man on behalf of his own human rights"; and to project the U.S. as an idealistic, moral nation actively working toward a better world.

If our overall human rights policy is to be effective and credible, one aspect needs to be that we have warmer and closer relationships with those governments which share our ideals and cooler and more distant relationships with those governments that don't. This necessarily means that our relations with the military governments in the Southern Cone should range from being cordial and correct--as in the case of Brazil, where we have a wide range of consultative mechanisms--to being distant, as in the case of Chile, where the Letelier investigation currently prevents us from taking any other position.

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Another element of our policy should be a willingness, at appropriate times, to back up our rhetoric with actions, many of which are mandated by law anyway. At the same time, we need to continue to distinguish between the three different "baskets" of human rights in implementing our policy. For example, with respect to Argentina, we have informed the government that our concern with human rights there is focused on basket #1 (integrity of the person), and we recognize and accept the government's assessment that democratization is a long-term goal.

I am sending you a couple of articles that were in the New York Times in the past year, which deal with this subject. I would be very interested in your comments on these articles and on my perception of our human rights policy.

cc: Jessica Mathews

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